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An electronic newsletter from the Nova Scotia Provincial Library

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Questions or comments about the activities in this issue should be directed to the contact people named. To subscribe to THE DISSEMINATOR, send a message to listserv@nshpl.library.ns.ca and enter the following text in the body of the message: **subscribe dissem-list yourfirstname yourlastname**. Comments on or suggestions for THE DISSEMINATOR should be directed to Sue Dirani (sdirani@nshpl.library.ns.ca).

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NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

In March, the Provincial Library participated in a National Consultation on Digital Collections at National Library to identify the major issues and challenges involved in a preferred approach to the future development of digital library resources in Canada. The two-day consultation, involving more than thirty institutions from across Canada, brainstormed the requirements arising from the evolution of this new industry in a series of breakout and plenary sessions after stage-setting presentations by National Library staff . Nova Scotia's recent digitization projects, such as the Acadian Odyssey and the electronic publishing of Bills by the Nova Scotia Legislative Library, form part of this national momentum.

In general, digitization projects fall into one of three areas, the digitization of locally held collections, the creation of new resources through digital publication, and the central management of, and access to, electronic full-text files in different libraries across Canada. The participants, all of whom had experience in digitization, made a strong point that the Internet does not even approach a digital library at present, nor is it likely to do so in the future. A true digital library will incorporate both fixed and electronic materials developed with the same time-proven processes and towards the same goals of easy universal and sustainable access as traditional libraries. Building digital libraries will be a long-term effort that is neither easy nor cheap and will necessitate a high degree of cooperation to develop coordinated collections.

In identifying the major issues, it was emphasised that they needed to be addressed collectively, so that the choices made at the local level become based, where appropriate, on accepted standards and best practices. Such a coordinated approach will optimize the sustainability of both the access to and the electronic resources themselves as the information highway continues to develop. The National Library was identified as the most appropriate institution to provide leadership and sponsorship of this project known as the Canadian Initiative on Digital Libraries. They were requested to prepare a document of purpose, a "call to arms" which will lay out a plan of action and the resources required for Canadian libraries, and will recognize the need to establish relations with other stakeholders in the information chain outside of libraries.

The Canadian Initiative on Digital Libraries will be launched this summer with the release of a statement of purpose and a proposal for one site to become a national clearinghouse for information on projects (active and planned), workshops, training, standards and best practices. Anyone requiring more detailed information or a copy of the participant's report should contact Bridget Turner at the Nova Scotia

Provincial Library at (902) 424-2470 or by e-mail (bturner@nshpl.library.ns.ca).

DRA USER'S CONFERENCE

Much of the program at the DRA User's Conference, held March 2-5 1997 in St. Louis, was devoted to discussion of DRA's "New Product" which uses Object Oriented design giving both library staff and their patrons far greater flexibility and power over the manipulation and presentation of data at the work station. This newly written software, three modules of which are due to be released this July, will be a full Windows-based product. Being alerted to future DRA software developments allows the Nova Scotia Provincial Library some lead time for planning for a possible migration, and any necessary upgrades to equipment and communication networks in preparation for when the software becomes available to MultiLIS users. The automation grant program envisaged that the necessity for the first major upgrade to the present software and the RS6000 would occur in 1999/2000, so this coincides well with the DRA plans, although the program is not necessarily limited to these.

The module of major importance at this time to NcompasS users is DRAWeb2. This will give a user friendly interface to anyone searching NcompasS regardless of their location or the platform they use, as the requirement for function keys will be eliminated. MultiLIS adapted the more bug-free second version of DRAWeb to its database structure, and this will be installed on a Windows NT server this September following its general DRA release in July. Windows NT server technology will be used to facilitate greater security for the RS6000 and will also support multinational scripts in the OPAC via its support of Unicode.

MultiLIS will issue at least two more upgrades before the migration to the new DRA product occurs. Version 11.2 will be released in December and will incorporate the ability to print to a Receipt printer at the circulation desk, the support of X12 electronic data interchange (EDI) for purchase orders, a Self-charge facility and other functions in the Serials module. It is apparent that the learning curve of everyone both at Provincial Library and in the other participating libraries is going to be continuously challenged over the coming months and even years with all these improvements to the MultiLIS software, the complexity of which we are only now beginning to comprehend. -- Bridget Turner

Z39.50 INFORMATION SESSION

On April 28, the Provincial Library's Michael Gillis, Dale MacMillan, Johanna Cooper and Marion Pape attended a Z39.50 information session at University of New Brunswick organized by the National Library of Canada. The session included an overview of the Z39.50 standard, demonstrations of Z39.50 compliant systems, and a panel discussion on Z39.50 issues and trends. Vendors included DRA with a demonstration of DRAFind, DRAWeb, GEAC with GeoPac, GeoWeb, Geolat and SIRSI with Vision WebCat. This was a good opportunity for librarians and information specialists to find out what Z39.50 is all about and to ask vendors about their products.

The Nova Scotia Provincial Library is particularly interested in applying this standard to ensure access

to holdings in Nova Scotia libraries to all citizens of the province. We learned that Z39.50 will not solve all the problems caused by a lack of standardization. The library community needs to look to its own operations and come to some agreement about the use of MARC fields for certain types of data. We particularly need to demand performance from our vendors to give libraries what they need. Finally, we need to keep discussing this standard with all our colleagues and decision makers to ensure that we understand the full implications of the technology. The Nova Scotia Provincial Library will be setting up discussion sessions with potential implementors in the province over the next short while. If you would like an information package from the information session, please contact Debbie Ross at 424-2457 or dross@nshpl.librar! y.ns.ca.

NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY ACCESS COMMITTEE (NSCAC)

On April 24, the Provincial Library hosted a Community Access Workshop for Stakeholders on behalf of the Nova Scotia Community Access Committee (NSCAC). The attendees, from a wide variety of Provincial organizations, learned about the vision, strategy and action plan of the NSCAC with an outline of all the different types of projects currently underway. These included descriptions and/or demos about Chebucto Community Net, Library Access to the Internet and involvement with the CAP Program. Several regional libraries sent delegates to the information session as did the Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia. NSCAC received valuable feedback from all delegates. A short summary from the session is available from NSCAC's new Executive Assistant, Karen Parusel, a recent graduate from Dalhousie's School of Library and Information Studies. She can be reached at paruseki@gov.ns.ca or 424-2459.

AILEEN LEWIS' RETIREMENT

Aileen Lewis, Assistant Director, Administrative Services of the Halifax Regional Library, has announced her retirement effective April 30, 1997. Aileen retires after twenty-eight years of public library service, having worked at the Nova Scotia Provincial Library, Cape Breton Regional Library, Eastern Counties Regional Library, Halifax County Regional Library, and from 1978 to 1996 as Chief Executive Officer of the Dartmouth Regional Library.

Under her leadership, the Dartmouth Regional Library became the first public library in the province of Nova Scotia to install an automated library system. Not only did the Dartmouth Regional Library automate, but at the same time, designed and built the Alderney Gate Library, adding to the complexities of both projects. The success of the Alderney Gate Library reflects Aileen's attention to detail, sense of decor, and promotion of quality library service. In 1985, the bookmobile service was changed to the Just-For-Kids Mobile Library, providing a unique service for children. Also under her leadership, in 1995 the Dartmouth North Public Library was established. A reception to celebrate Aileen's retirement was held April 25 where she was honoured with an address from the Premier, the Honourable John Savage, who was Mayor of Dartmouth when the Alderney Gate Library was built. We thank Aileen for her dedicated service and wish her well in her retirement. -- Harold Gaudet, ! Hali fax Regional Library

ASSISTANCE FUND ESTABLISHED

On Thursday, March 22, Western Counties Regional Library staff member Cathy d'Entremont lost all her personal possessions in a fire which caused the total destruction of the apartment building where she lived. Fortunately, her tenant's insurance will cover the replacement cost of most of her major furniture items but she also lost many books and personal articles which cannot be replaced. A special bank account has been established at the Royal Bank in Yarmouth for donations to help cover the extra expenses incurred as a result of this tragedy. Please contact Trudy Amirault (tamiraul@nsy.library.ns.ca) if you would like to make a contribution. Cathy has been at WCRL Headquarters for 22 years and, for the past 15 years, has been working on a B.A. in English by correspondence from the University of Waterloo.

TRAINING NEWS

Over the last two months, things have been very busy on the training front, especially for staff of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library. After Mother Nature forced the cancellation of a 2-day training session, Johanna Cooper provided the first day of Collection Exchange training for Charlotte Janes, Wendy Trimper, and Pam Ellis at AVRL Headquarters on March 10. The training covered configuring the Collection Exchange Module and using the Module for the first exchange. Training for subsequent exchanges and the special requests function will follow at a later date. On March 13 and 20, Johanna provided Acquisitions training for Charlotte Janes, Wendy Trimper, and Cathy Chalmers in preparation for implementation of the Acquisitions Module at the beginning of the new fiscal year (April 1, 1997). On April 17 and 18, Dianne Brunelle of DRA/MultiLIS in Montreal provided Circulation training for Charlotte Janes and Wendy Trimper. Johanna Cooper also attended the training.

Gillian Webster and Johanna Cooper each gave a workshop to Western Counties Regional Library staff at their Spring in-service on April 7. Gillian gave an overview of tips to remember when conducting a reference interview and this session included mock interviews between library staff and patrons. Part of the fun is getting audience participation! Thanks to all the Western Counties staff who volunteered. Johanna presented a workshop on strategies for searching the World Wide Web using AltaVista and Yahoo. After a demonstration, staff were given an opportunity to challenge their search skills with a hands-on exercise.

On April 15 and 16, Dianne Brunelle of DRA/MultiLIS in Montreal provided Circulation training at Western Counties Regional Library Headquarters for six staff members from Headquarters and the Digby and Weymouth branches. Johanna Cooper also attended the training.

DATABASE ACCESS PROJECT

User Services staff at the Provincial Library have been working on a proposal to provide the regional public libraries with shared-cost access to bibliographic/full-text databases covering general interest and health information. Databases from several different companies are being considered and Internet

evaluation sites for these have been made available so that reference staff in the regional libraries and User Services staff can try them out.

A survey form has been sent out to the regional libraries to obtain feedback on these different databases which will be considered when User Services staff make recommendations about databases that are most suitable for use in the regional libraries. The databases which are being considered are: Information Access Company's General Reference Center and Health Reference Center; Ebsco's Magazine Article Summaries 650, Canadian Magazine Article Summaries and Health Source; and Micromedia's Canadian Business & Current Affairs database. We are also testing DRA-Net which offers access to multiple databases from different companies using a single search engine. We are assessing DRA-Net's searching capability on Information Access Company's General Periodical Index and Health Index databases. A report will be presented to the Council of Regional Librarians meeting on May 1-2. -- Carol Morris

LINKed

While I'm waiting for those theme suggestions to start rolling in, I'll focus this month on health information sites. If you know of any interesting sites or if you would like to suggest a theme for future columns, please e-mail me (sdirani@nshpl.library.ns.ca).

Health AtoZ
http://www.healthatoz.com/
- This site aspires to be a launching pad for medical information on the Web. Providing search capabilities, it is intended for medical professionals as well as health consumers.

MEdIC
http://dpalm2.med.uth.tmc.edu/
- While mainly providing information for health professionals, this site also includes the Health Explorer which provides general information on health related issues for patients.

Avicenna
http://www.avicenna.com
- This is a comprehensive medical resources free to all health professionals. Provides access to Medline and lots of reference materials. Registration is required to use the site but there is no cost.

Local community health information is available at the Community Health Promotion Network Atlantic site (http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/ CommunitySupport/CHPNA/CHPNAHome.html) and at Yarmouth's Cooperative Consumer Health Information Project (http://www.ycn. library.ns.ca/hosp/cons.htm) -- Sue Dirani

REFERENCE ON THE NET

More reference questions received at the NS Provincial Library which were answered using the Internet.

Q. What are the requirements for licensing a homeopathic practitioner in Canada?

A. The keywords "homeopathic Canada" were entered in the InfoSeek search engine and this found the home page for the Homeopathic College of Canada (www.inforamp.net/~homeocol/hcc.html). According to the information there, homeopathy is currently unregulated in Canada. This site also provides links to some other sites on this topic.

Q. Would like information about the care and breeding of the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever dog.

A. A search using the phrase "Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever" in the Excite and InfoSeek search engines found The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) homepage (www.tiac.net/users/smcgrath/tollers/). This has information on the history, characteristics and temperament, frequently asked questions, special medical problems, standard and resources for this breed of dog. -- Carol Morris

PROFESSIONAL READING

This month's column features two recently acquired publications of particular interest to public libraries. These items can be obtained from the Provincial Library's professional collection through regular interlibrary loan channels.

1) Liddle, Carol. **Collection Development Plan for Janesville Public Library**. Janesville, Wis: Janesville Public Library, c1994. (Call# Prof. 025.21 Col)

This plan, developed for the public library in Janesville, Wisconsin, is designed to serve as a guide to present and future selectors in developing their collections to meet the needs of the communities which their public libraries serve. In addition to outlining the responsibilities of persons involved in the selection process, it also describes areas in the library collection and advocates future developments for them.

2) University of Wisconsin. **Life Stories in Library Programming [Kit]**. Oshkosh, Wis: University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, c1996. (Call# Prof. 027 .625 Lif)

This audio visual kit is an instructional course which includes four video programs on two tapes. It also includes a booklet which is a print supplement to the video portion of this course. The kit is designed to help you create live story telling programming in your library that will draw upon unique experiences and life dramas that are present in members of your community. It provides suggestions and techniques for the effective integration of real life stories into the regular story telling programs of public libraries. -- Frank Oram

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